

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
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AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: JANATA RETREATS FROM THE BRINK --
FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST

REF: NEW DELHI 10328

1. IN A DRAMATIC TURNABOUT WHICH HAS CONFOUNDED THE DIRE
PREDICTIONS OF POLITICAL PUNDITS HERE, MEDIATORS APPEAR TO
HAVE ARRANGED A LAST-MINUTE TRUCE TO DEFUSE -- FOR THE MOMENT
-- THE RAPIDLY ESCALATING CRISIS IN THE JANATA PARTY. LATE
ON THE NIGHT OF JULY 6, JANATA PRESIDENT CHANDRA SHEKHAR
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ANNOUNCED THE RESULTS OF HECTIC EFFORTS BY PEACE-MAKERS:
CHARAN SINGH'S FOLLOWERS AGREED TO CALL OFF THE JULY 17
PEASANT RALLY WHICH THEY WERE ORGANIZING TO EXPRESS SOLI-
DARITY WITH THE FORMER HOME MINISTER. ALSO CANCELLED WAS
THE JULY 7 MEETING OF JANATA MLA'S IN HARYANA WHICH HAD
BEEN CALLED TO REMOVE DEVI LAL AS CHIEF MINISTER AND ELECT
A SUCCESSOR. IN ADDITION, CHANDRA SHEKHAR TOLD NEWSMEN

THAT MUTUAL DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE HELD TO REACH AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT OF PARTY DIFFERENCES AND THAT SUCH ELDER FIGURES AS J.P. NARAYAN AND ACHARYA KRIPALANI WOULD BE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE EFFORTS. THE JANATA PRESIDENT ALSO HINTED THAT PRIME MINISTER DESAI MAY MEET WITH CHARAN SINGH IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

2. INFORMATION IS STILL SKETCHY ON WHAT PROMPTED CHARAN SINGH AND HIS FOLLOWERS TO CANCEL THEIR PLANNED PEASANT RALLY OR FOR THAT MATTER WHAT UNDERSTANDINGS AND QUID PRO QUOS WERE GIVEN BY EACH SIDE TO PERMIT THE CONCLUSION OF LAST NIGHT'S CEASE-FIRE. INITIAL SPECULATION THAT CHARAN SINGH MIGHT BE RESTORED TO THE CABINET WAS ANSWERED BY CHANDRA SHEKHAR WITH THE CRYPTIC REMARK THAT "GOVERNMENT IS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE PRIME MINISTER." A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE PM TELLS US THAT MORARJI WILL NEVER REAPPOINT CHARAN SINGH AS HOME MINISTER, ALTHOUGH THERE IS A CHANCE HE COULD BE GIVEN ANOTHER PORTFOLIO.

3. WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THE APPARENT "AGREEMENT" REACHED LAST NIGHT IS ONLY A TRUCE AIMED AT DEFUSING THE MOST IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS FACING THE JANATA IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS: THE THREATENED REMOVAL OF DEVI LAL AND THE HOLDING OF THE PRO-CHARAN SINGH PEASANT RALLY ON JULY 17. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THIS LAST-MINUTE CEASE-FIRE WILL HOLD; TODAY (JULY 7) SOME CHARAN SINGH LOYALISTS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE RALLY'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CANCELLATION WAS "NOT UNCONDITIONAL." WHETHER OR NOT THE PEASANT TRUCE STICKS OR NOT, HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT ADDRESS THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL ILLS AFFLICTING THE JANATA: THE CLASH OF PERSONAL AMBITIONS BETWEEN ITS TWO SENIOR-MOST LEADERS AND THE UNRESTRAINED, IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS OF SOME OF CHARAN SINGH'S FOLLOWERS. CHARAN SINGH REMAINS AN ANGRY AND HIGHLY AGGRIEVED PLAYER IN WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE A PROLONGED STRUGGLE. GOHEEN

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